

MERCHANDISE RETURN SYSTEM  
WITH VALUE ADDED RETURNS PROCESSING  
(DATA COMMUNICATIONS)

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method that facilitates customer returns of merchandise. The method makes use of a distributed system of returns centers. Customer returns are made  
5 using special machine readable return labels. The labels are addressed so that they are initially shipped to a returns center closest to the customer, thereby enabling "reverse zone skipping". The labels also identify the package, such as by invoice number. Once a package is  
10 received at the returns center, the label is scanned into a processing system that also stores various returns "rules", including rules for notifying the merchant and/or the returnee and for other data communications.